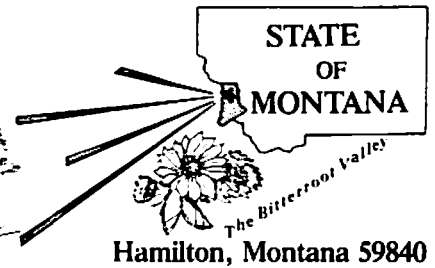
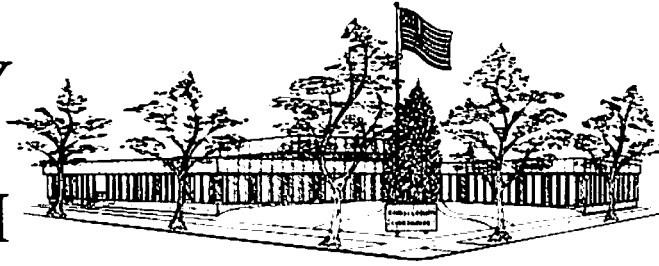


# COUNTY OF RAVALLI



Ravalli County Commissioners  
215 S. 4<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite A  
Hamilton, MT. 59840  
406-375-6500

April 11, 2007

Bill Meisner, Mayor of Stevensville  
&

Stevensville Town Council Members  
Paul Ludington, Bob Summers, Susan Evans and Tom Brown  
PO Box 30  
Stevensville, MT. 59870

Dear Mayor and Town Council Members:

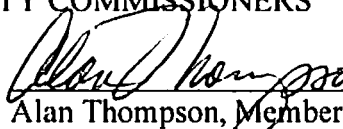
We are writing you in regard to the Stevensville City Court Judge, Barbara "Skip" Kohn and the case of Timothy D. Stephens. It has come to our attention that Mr. Stephens received a six-month jail sentence from Judge Kohn for "criminal contempt" due to his failure to pay a \$35 fine owed to the Stevensville City Court from a guilty plea to riding a mini-motorcycle on a city street (see attached court order). While our Civil Council has reviewed this matter and suggested that there may be issues with the legality of this sentence, this letter today does not discuss that matter.

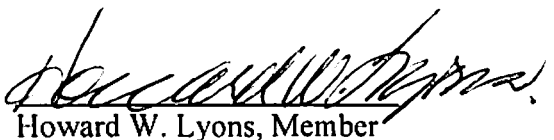
Our task today is to remind you that the Ravalli County Jail is not a debt collection tool for the Stevensville City Court, just as it is not for the Ravalli County Justices of the Peace. It costs the taxpayers of Ravalli County approximately \$55 per day to house inmates there. Over the course of a six-month sentence, it will cost approximately \$10,000 to house Mr. Stephens. While we appreciate the need for a court to maintain its dignity and ensure its fines are paid, charging Ravalli County \$10,000 to collect \$35 is unacceptable.

It is not our normal practice to interfere with the Court's operation and certainly our task today is not to encourage you to tell Judge Kohn how to be a judge. Our goal with this letter is that you might consider the insanity of this situation. As taxpayers yourself, we are sure that this is just as offensive to you as it is to us. It is our hope that you will speak to Judge Kohn about this matter. The Ravalli County Jail exists to lock up people who are a danger to our County. It is not a debtor's prison and should not be used as such.

Sincerely,  
BOARD OF RAVALLI COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

  
Greg Chilcott, Chairman

  
Alan Thompson, Member

  
Howard W. Lyons, Member